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<b>Applicant</b> WILLIAMS, Stephen, James et al	

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 in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

17 September 1999 (17.09.99)

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TITLE: Feed bottles for babies

DESCRIPTION

This invention relates to feed and drink bottles for babies and in particular to such bottles as are made from plastics material by an aseptic injection-moulding process.

Feed bottles for babies generally comprise a container for the milk or other nutrient liquid (feed); a (natural or synthetic) rubber teat for the mouth of the container, and a screw-threaded cap to fit on the mouth to retain the teat in position. To ensure that a baby's feed is not contaminated, it is usual to sterilise the bottle before use, as by cleaning the bottle in a sterilising liquid or using a steam steriliser. The same needs to be done with the teat and the cap of the bottle, to ensure their sterility. However, sterilisation, or even thorough cleaning of a baby's bottle, may be overlooked, or carried out inadequately, causing the feed to become contaminated.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided disposable, preferably aseptic, bottles intended for a single-use only. This is achieved by ensuring that the closure of the bottle cannot be removed once it has been fitted fully in place. One such method of doing this is disclosed in EP-A-0819417, which shows a wide-mouthed bottle body having a closure snap-fitted to it, the closure nipping the periphery of a wide flange on a teat between itself and the mouth of the body. After it has been fitted, the closure cannot be removed because a curved flange on the closure denies the user access to the

rim of the closure.

This known bottle suffers from serious disadvantages. One is that the bottle cannot be manufactured by known techniques, because of the reentrant angles in both the body and the flange. Even were this difficulty to be overcome, another disadvantage is that the complicated construction of the bottle would make it extremely expensive to manufacture, thus militating against users being prepared to pay so much for a single use bottle. Another disadvantage arises from the fact that the closure has to be pushed home by the user. It is inevitable that a flustered mother would sometimes push only part of the closure rim over the latching shoulder over the latching shoulder on the body, leaving the rest of the closure canted at a slight angle, which would prevent the bottle from being fluid-tight. She could be misled by the noise into thinking the closure was fully home, when only part of it was. This known 'theoretical' invention also is potentially dangerous to the baby, because a baby could pull the end of the teat so hard that its flange ceases to be clamped between the closure and the body, enabling the baby to pull the teat out of the bottle converting the teat into a potentially-lethal object which could suffocate the baby by becoming lodged in its windpipe. In addition, it may be possible with this bottle for the baby to deform the bottle immediately below the closure to an extent such that the fluid seal between the body and closure is broken, leading to a leakage of the liquid from the bottle which could prove dangerous to a feeding infant.

The present invention overcomes these disadvantages by providing a screw-threaded connection between the closure and the body, thus ensuring

that the closure remains parallel to the plane of the mouth of the body as it is being screwed into its latched position. In addition, the body is in the shape of a simple beaker which enables it to be made at high volumes by an injection-moulding machine under aseptic conditions. The teat is clamped irremovably to the closure by means of a retainer disc. The body does not come into contact with the teat, thus permitting the flange of the teat to be considerably smaller in area than the mouth of the body, thus economising in the use of the relatively-expensive material from which the teat is made.

According to another aspect of the invention, the teat is bonded to the closure in a manner which does not rely on the use of a retainer disc, so that the two become an integral unit. While such a unit may become coupled to a bottle body in an irremovable manner, it is within the purview of this invention for the one-way latching to be omitted, permitting the closure unit to be used more than once on a body containing liquid feed.

According to yet another aspect, the invention provides a feed bottle of which the body is formed with an integral teat, while access to the interior of the body is provided at an open end remote from the teat. The open end is intended to be closed after filling, in either a removable or irremovable manner, depending on the nature of the coupling between the end of the body and a cap movable between a remote position giving access to the open end, and a closed position providing a fluid-tight coupling with the body.

According to a yet further aspect, the invention provides a feed bottle of which the major components are made of plastics materials by an aseptic process, the

bottle including: a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a teat of plastics material permanently secured to it, or integral with it, and an open end at a location remote from the teat, the open end being intended to be sealed in a fluid-tight manner by means of a cap, the coupling between the cap and body being such that the coupling has to be broken to permit the cap to be removed from the body, the breakage ensuring that the cap is not again able to achieve a fluid-tight fit with the body.

Accordingly the present invention provides a feed bottle which is as claimed in the appended respective claims.

The present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is an exploded side elevation of one embodiment of the invention, of which the component parts shown in Fig 1(a)-(e) are in section;

Figures 1A and 1B show a variant on Figure 1;

Figure 2 is a side elevation of the bottle shown in Fig. 1 when assembled, with volume graduations applied to the side of its body;

Figure 3 is a section of the line III-III of Fig. 2, showing one embodiment of irreversible coupling between the body and closure;

Figure 4 is a sectional view of the upper part of another feed bottle of this invention;

Figure 5 is a view, similar to Fig. 4, of another embodiment of the invention;

Figure 6 is another view, similar to Fig. 4, of another embodiment, in

which a retainer disc has been dispensed with;

Figure 7 shows a variant of Figure 6;

Figure 8 is a view similar to Figure 6, showing the presence of an additional skirt on the closure;

Figure 9 is a view similar to Figure 6, showing different method of providing the closure with another form of irremovable coupling;

Figure 10 is a view similar to Figure 8 showing yet another form of coupling between the closure and body;

Figure 11 is a sectional view of another embodiment of combined closure and teat;

Figure 12 is a diagrammatic isometric view of a teat modified for use with the Figure 11 embodiment;

Figure 13, is a diagrammatic view, part in section, of another form of combined closure and teat;

Figure 14 is a side elevation, part in section, of another embodiment of the invention, having a sealable cap at the end of the body remote from the teat; and

Figure 15 is a view, similar to Figure 13, of an alternative form of that embodiment.

In the following description of the drawings, components which are similar in different Figs. retain their original references.

The bottle shown in Figure 1 and 2 comprises basically a body 2 acting as the container of the liquid feed. At its upper end (as viewed), the wide mouth

4 of the body is formed with screw-threads 6 and with a projecting annulus of ratchet teeth 8. Intended to cooperate with the threads 6 is a closure 10 having its inner surfaces formed with complementary screw-threads 12 and having an extended skirt 14 with an annular series of complementary ratchet teeth 16, to be described in more detail below. Intended to be clamped between the closure and the body is a retainer disc 18 having a hollow stub 20 projecting from it. A teat 22 for the bottle has an end flange 24, the diameter of the annular flange being significantly smaller than the inner diameter of the mouth 4. The inner diameter of the opening in the teat is an elastic fit on the stub 20. Designed to clip over a shoulder 25 on the closure 10 is a teat shield 26. In Figures 1A and B the retainer disc 18 is provided with a vent hole 19 at a shoulder of the disc. The vent hole allows pressure equalisation either side of the teat, i.e. inside and outside. The hole vents back into the bottle and an infant sucking on the teat can keep the seal around the teat. A feeding infant does not have to remove its lips/mouth from the teat to equalise the air pressure to gain further liquid flow. Consequently, the bottle becomes anti-colic. As infants breathe through their nostrils during feeding because of the pressure equalisation facility the infant is less likely to swallow feed down the wrong way.

Figure 3 shows the two annular series of interengaging teeth on the body 2 and the cap 10. As can be seen from it, both series of teeth 8 and 16 are in the form of ratchet teeth, with each tooth having a radial face and an oblique face. The angle of obliquity is determined by the nature of the material from which both the cap and the body are made. As can be seen from Figure 1, the cap 10

has at its centre an opening which is a close fit on the other part of the teat adjacent to the flange 24.

In order to arrive at the assembled bottle shown in Figure 2, the teat 20 is first pushed into place in closure 10. Thereafter the disc 18 is positioned inside the closure 10, with the stub being embraced by the inner surfaces of the flange 24 and the adjacent surface of the teat. After the body 2 has been charged with the necessary volume of feed, the closure is then screwed on to the body. During this movement, the teeth 16 on the closure do not touch the threads 6. Towards the end of the screwing action, the teeth on the closure 16 and body 8 come into contact with each other, and their oblique faces slide on each other, such movement being permitted by the elastic nature of the materials of which the closure and body are made. This 'double ratchet' construction ensures that, while the closure may move relatively to the body in the screwing-on direction, it is impossible for the closure to be unscrewed from the body, so that, once assembled (which happens after the feed has been put in the bottle), the closure cannot be removed from the body. This ensures that the bottle cannot be reused as a feed bottle, so that it is a 'single-use' (or 'disposable') bottle.

It is a feature of this invention that all the components of the bottle are made of plastics materials which may be made into the components of the bottle by an aseptic process, so that the products do not need post-sterilisation, but can be packed as manufactured. With all interior surfaces of the bottle, and both interior and exterior surfaces of the teat, being aseptic, the user need do nothing but ensure that the feed is sterile before putting it in the bottle and closing it by

means of the closure.

Amongst the materials which can be used for the body, retainer disc and closure are polypropylene and polyethylene. A suitable material for the teat itself, and one which is more expensive than the others, is a thermoplastic elastomer, such as that sold under the trade name KRATON. Not all teat materials lend themselves to being made by an aseptic process, in which case the teats have to be pre-sterilised before being positioned in the closure. After manufacture and assembly (in those versions which comprise separate components, not necessarily of the same plastics material) the bottle, if it is not aseptic as made, may be rendered sterile by means of irradiating it with ultra-violet or infrared radiation, with x-rays, gamma rays or an electron beam, subject to the plastics materials not being degraded as a result.

In the bottle of Figures 1-3, the disc 18 prevents the teat from being pulled out from its position between the closure and the disc. In addition, introversion of the teat, as by the finger of a baby, also cannot bring about separation of the teat from the closure. This fit can be enhanced by designing the disc so that its periphery is clamped between the closure and the rim of the body. The presence in the final bottle of the disc gives such stiffness to the closure that determined pressure inwardly on the body immediately below the skirt 14 is unable to distort the body sufficiently for it to come away from the interior of the closure by a distance enough to allow air into the bottle, or feed to leak from it. Thus, under all foreseen conditions of use, neither the baby nor its carer is able to regain access to the bottle once it has been latched in position;

to remove the teat therefrom, or to cause the bottle to lose its fluid-tightness.

In that form of the invention shown in Fig. 4, the teat 22 is held irremovably on the cap 10 by means of a retainer ring 28. The ring is shaped so that it is able to clamp the flange 24 of the teat between itself and the closure. Its axially-directed cylindrical part 30 is formed at its free end with an outer lip or bead 32. The spacing of this lip from the radial flange 34 of the ring is related to the thickness of the flange 24 of the teat so that, when the ring has been pushed in to the mouth of the teat, the lip forces the material of the teat to deform slightly so that the teat embraces the rim of the opening in the closure 10. In this embodiment, and in many other embodiments, of this invention, the closure and body can have the cooperating sets of ratchet teeth to ensure that, once tightened, the closure cannot be removed from the body by unscrewing, although these teeth are not clearly shown in the drawings, for clarity.

In the Figure 5 embodiment, the closure 10 is formed with two stepped flanges 36 and 38. The outer cylindrical surface of flange 36 is formed with screw-threads 40. Intended to engage the threads 40 is a lock ring 42, having an inwardly-directed flange 44 and a complementary set of internal screw-threads. When the lock ring is screwed into position on flange 36, it clamps flange 24 of teat 22 between itself and the shoulder of the closure between the two flanges. Although not shown in the drawing, the ring 42 is movable relatively to the screw-threads 40 in only the tightening direction, so that it too is not removable from its clamping engagement on the teat.

In the Figure 6 version of the invention, the retainer disc is dispensed

with. Instead, the teat 22 is made integrally with the closure by a two-step ('two-shot') manufacturing process, by which the contacting surfaces of the teat flange 24 and end wall 46 of the closure become bonded together. This bond ensures the safety of the bottle, while its fluid-tightness is ensured by the fit between the closure and body. In the Figure 6 embodiment, the mouth of the body may be stiffened, by forming a thick ring 48 of plastics material which resists inwards displacement of the body relative to the skirt of the closure.

Figure 7 shows one embodiment of this invention in which the teat 24 is bonded to the closure 10, or is kept in place in it by a retainer 18. In this version, the screw-threads by which the closure is secured to the body 2 are internal of the body, and external of the closure. Although not shown in the drawing, the interior of the body may be formed with a series of internal teeth intended to mesh with complementary teeth projecting below the screw-threaded skirt 13 of the closure when the closure is nearing the end of its screwing-in motion relative to the body, and after the fit between the closure and body is fluid-tight. The interengaging ratchet teeth play no part in ensuring the fluid-tightness of the seal, but are provided solely to prevent the closure's being unscrewed from the body after the closure has been screwed fully home. As the form and position of the ratchet teeth do not form part of the subject-matter of this invention, they are not described in any further detail herein. This embodiment has the advantage that no amount of inwards force on the wall of the body near or on its thickened rim 3 has any effect on the seal between the closure and the body, and similar force applied to the closure cannot distort the skirt 13 away from the rim 3.

Figure 8 version is similar to that of Figure 6, except that the resistance to inwards deformation is provided by a close-fitting skirt 50 extending from the end wall 46 against the inner surface of the mouth of the body.

The embodiment of Figure 9 is similar to that of Figure 6, with the difference that a rib 52 is provided on the body 2. That face of the rib 52 facing the closure is formed with an upwardly-directed (as viewed) set of ratchet teeth 8, while the opposing end face of the skirt 14 of the closure is formed with a complementary set of ratchet teeth 16.

In that version shown in Figure 10, this likewise is similar to that of Figure 8, except that the one-way coupling between the closure and the body takes for the form of a least one annular rib 54 of triangular cross-section on the body, and a complementary rib or recess 56 on or in the skirt 14. This form of coupling means that the closure has to be pushed on to the body 2, which has the objections mentioned above.

In Figure 11 version, the teat 22 is also secured directly to the closure 10. The end wall 46 of the closure is formed with at least two inwardly-and axially-directed retainers 58 of 'mushroom' shape. As shown in Figure 12, the flange 24 of the teat is formed with two openings 60. Preferably the inner diameter of the openings 60 is slightly less than the diameter of the 'stalks' of the retainers 58. The heads of the retainers are sloped or otherwise shaped to facilitate their being pushed into the openings 60 in the teat. When the retainers are fully in place, the walls of the openings 60 are a fluid-tight grip on the stalks, and the heads of the retainers rest against the inner face of the flange 24. There are as

many retainers on the closure as are needed to ensure that the contact between the cap and the teat is fluid-tight over the whole area of the flange, to prevent milk etc. from seeping out from between the cap and the teat in use.

In that version of the invention shown in Figure 13 the flange 24 of the teat 22 is convoluted and engages the closure in a fluid-tight manner without the use of auxiliary members, by virtue of its inherent elasticity. The length of its cylindrical flange as formed, prior to its being folded about a cylindrical flange 62 extending from the inner end of the opening in the end wall 46 of the closure, ensures that the teat grips the flange 24 too tightly to be dislodged by pulling on the exposed part of the teat, or by introversion of the teat into the interior of the body.

In all the above embodiments of this invention, the closure is stated as having to be screwed or otherwise coupled on to the body of the bottle by the user after the liquid feed has been put in the body. As an alternative to this, the cooperating screw-threads may be made of such a plastics material, and to have a cross-sectional shape, that permits the cap to be pushed on to the mouth of the body, and only finally tightening the screw. The shape of the interlocking ratchet teeth may also be modified to facilitate their coming into engagement with each other by relative axial movement.

In contrast to all the previous embodiments of this invention, in the versions shown in Figures 14 and 15, the closure 66 is not used to hold the teat, but is used merely to close the mouth of the body of the bottle. In these versions, the mouth is formed at the end of the body remote from the teat. The mouth may

be provided with a beaded edge 64. The closure 66 has in its edge flange 68 an annular recess of cross-section complementary with that of the bead 64. One or other of the two annular walls of the recess is intended to have a line of weakness around its base. In contrast with the other versions of the invention, while the closure 66 is able to be removed fairly easily from the beaded edge, the act of doing so applies such force to the respective wall that it breaks along its line of weakness and becomes detached from the rest of the closure. This ensures that, while the closure may be removed, it cannot be replaced, thus preventing the bottle from being reused as a baby bottle.

In the Figure 14 version, the closure 70 is moulded in one piece with the rest of the body which, in this version, has the teat 22 also moulded in one piece with the body. The mouth of the opening in the body is slightly flared outwardly, and the closure is formed with an inwardly-directed lip 72. This lip has a line of weakness at its root, so that it too becomes separated from the rest of the closure when force is applied to remove the closure from its grip on the flared mouth of the body.

In all versions of the bottle, and as shown in Figure 2, the plastics material forming the body may be transparent or translucent, and graduation marks 80 may be moulded or otherwise formed in, or applied to, its walls to act as a guide to the volume of feed in the bottle.

Accordingly it will be seen that this invention provides baby feed bottles which may be made by an aseptic process of plastics material, and which are inherently of inexpensive construction, particularly when made in large numbers.

CLAIMS

1. A single-use feed bottle of which the major components are made of plastics materials, the bottle including: a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a mouth intended to be sealed in a fluid tight manner by means of a screw-threaded closure, the closure and the body having on their inner and outer surfaces respectively mutually cooperating formations to cause the closure to be irremovable from the body after the closure has reached a limit position on the body, in which it forms a fluid-tight fit with the body, and in which a teat having a flange of smaller diameter than the inner diameter of the mouth of the body is clamped to the closure by a retainer member so as to render the teat irremovable from the closure.
2. A bottle as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mutually cooperating formations comprise a set of ratchet teeth on the closure intended to cooperate with a lug carried by the body.
3. A bottle as claimed in claim 2, wherein the lug of the body is provided by one of a set of ratchet teeth on the body.
4. A bottle as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 made by an aseptic process.
5. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, in which the retainer member is adapted to have its periphery clamped between the closure and the rim of the body when the closure is in irremovable position.
6. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, in which the retainer

member has an integral central stub cylinder which projects into the interior of the teat.

7. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the retainer member has a vent hole in a region which traps the teat flange against the closure.

8. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the body is made of polypropylene, and has been formed by an injection-moulding operation.

9. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, in which the closure, or closure and retainer, is or are made of high-density polyethylene by an injection-moulding operation.

10. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, including a teat shield having an opening which is a push fit on a shoulder forming part of the closure.

11. A bottle as claimed in claim 10, in which the shield has in its opening a series of inward projections intended to engage a complementary recess in the closure.

12. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the body is made of transparent or translucent material, and carries at least one series of graduation markings enabling the volume of liquid in the body to be ascertained visually by inspection.

13. A feed bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the retainer member has an outer diameter less than the inner diameter of the mouth of the

body, and in which the member is held in place on the closure by virtue of the resilience of the teat material.

14. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the teat is made of a thermoplastics elastomer.

15. A combined closure and teat unit for use with a feed bottle, in which the closure and teat of made of dissimilar plastics materials by a two-stage aseptic process, in one stage of which one component is formed, and in the other stage of which the other component is formed in such a way that it becomes bonded to the said one component.

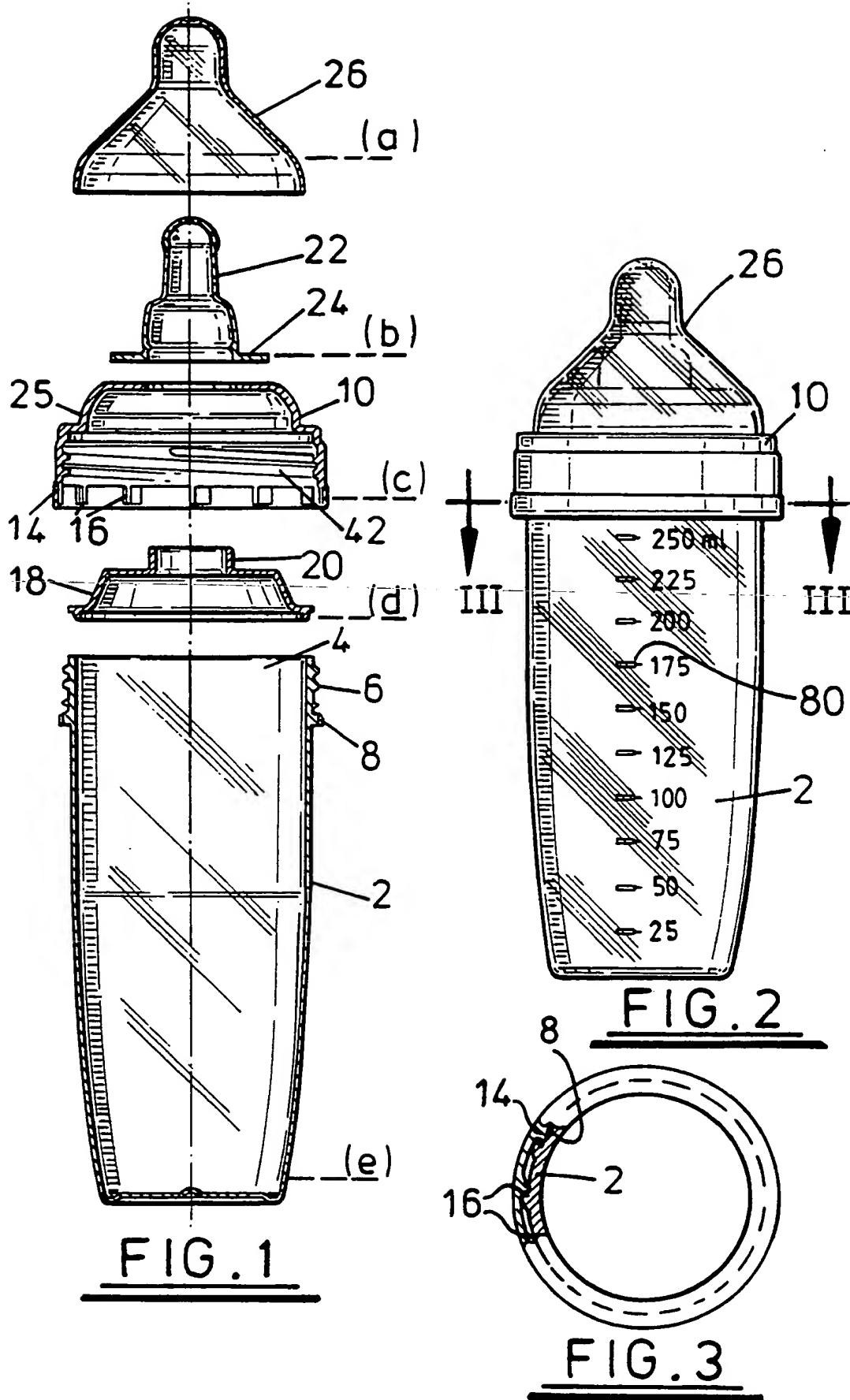
16. A unit as claimed in claim 15, in which the closure is formed with a series of ratchet teeth intended to permit the closure only to be screwed on to the body of a feed bottle once the teeth on the closure have come into contact with a complementary set of ratchet teeth carried by the body.

17. A feed bottle of which the major components are made of plastics materials by an aseptic process, the bottle including: a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a teat of plastics material permanently secured to it, or integral with it, and an open end at a location remote from the teat, the open end being intended to be sealed in a fluid-tight manner by means of a cap, the coupling between the cap and body being such that the coupling has to be broken to permit the cap to be removed from the body, the breakage ensuring that the cap is not again able to achieve a fluid-tight fit with the body.

18. A feed bottle of which major components are made of plastics materials,

the bottle including a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a mouth intended to be sealed in a fluid-tight manner by means of a screw-threaded closure, and in which a teat having a flange of smaller diameter than the inner diameter of the mouth of the body is clamped to the closure by a retainer member so as to render the teat irremovable from the closure.

19. A feed bottle as claimed in claim 18, wherein the teat is made of a thermoplastic elastomer.

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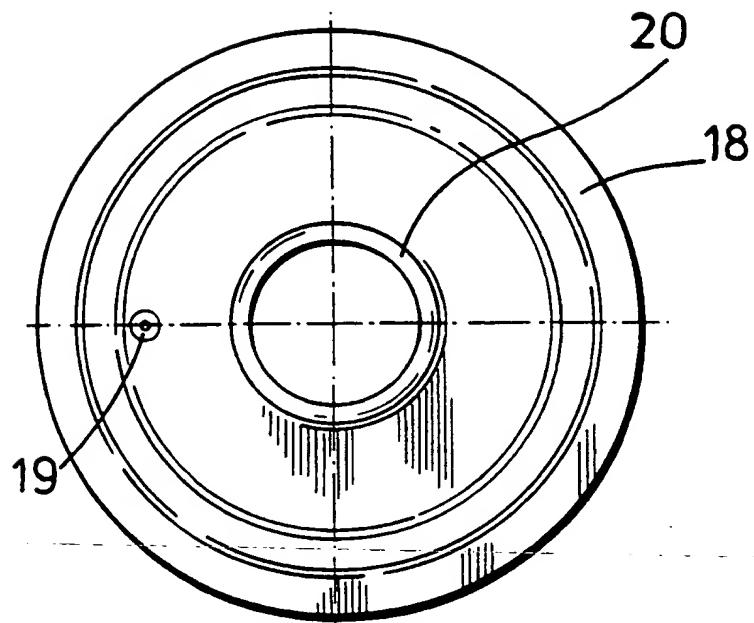
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FIG. 1A

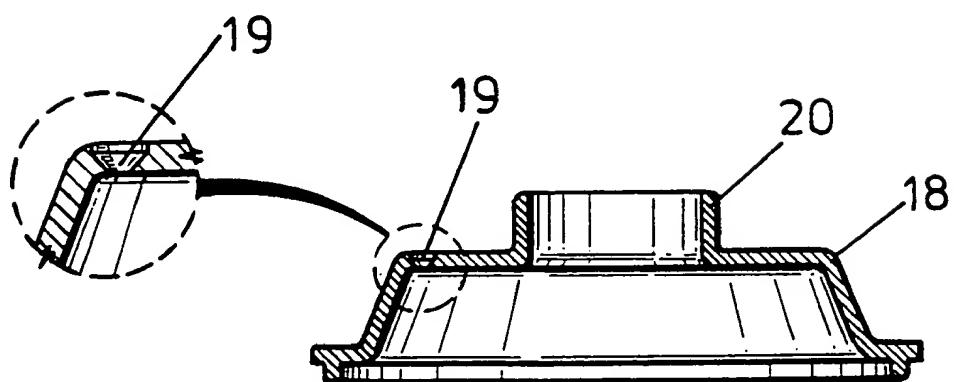
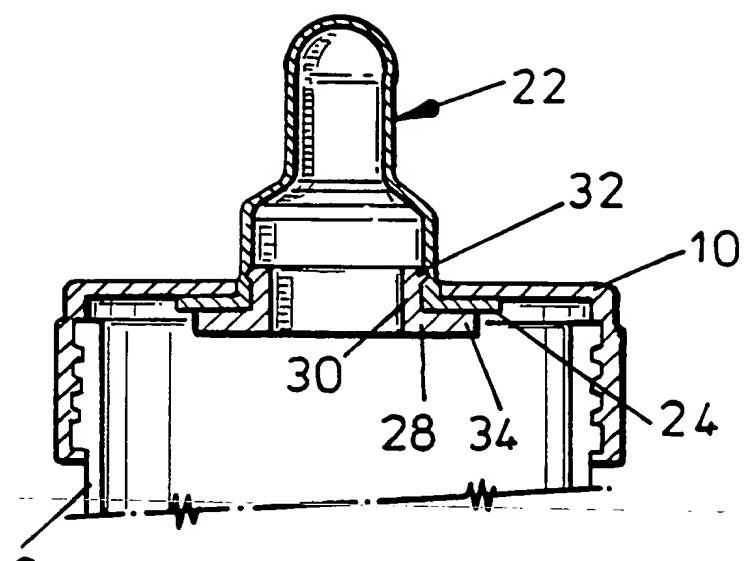
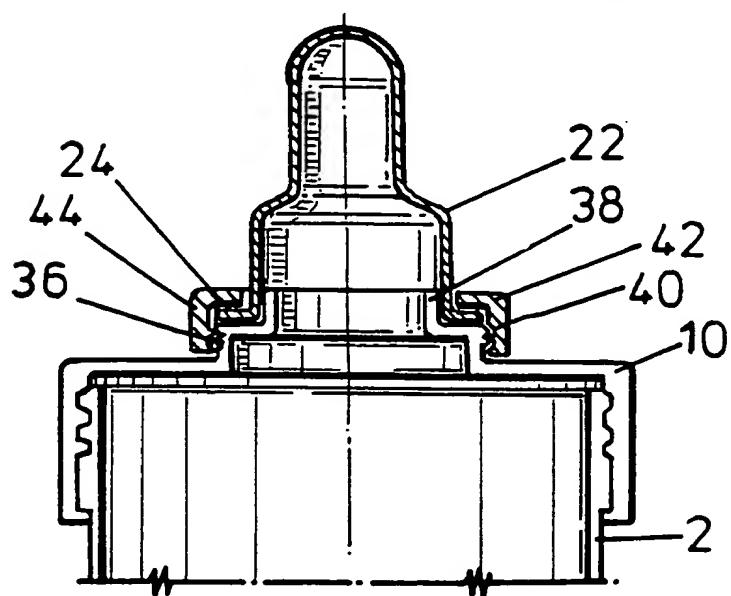
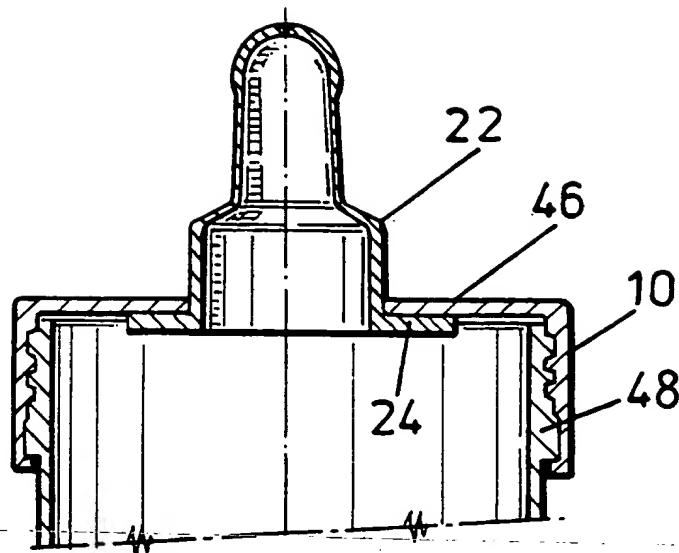
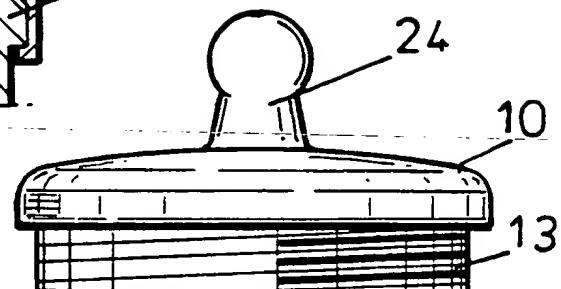
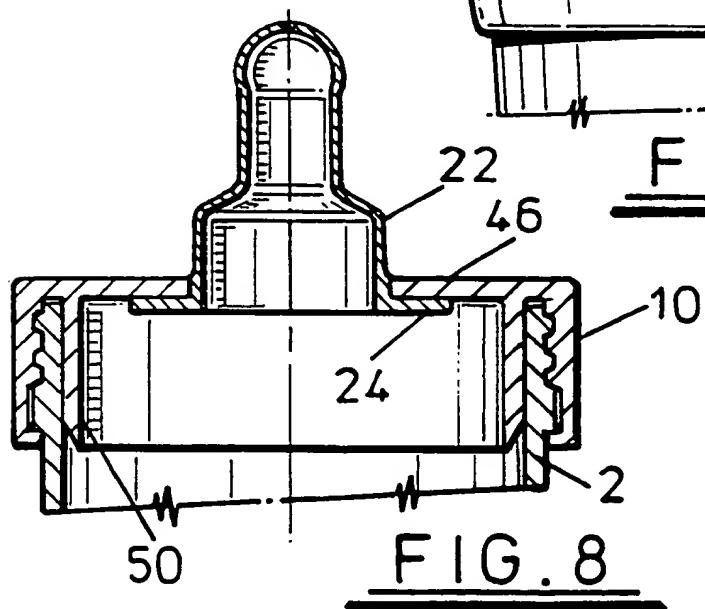
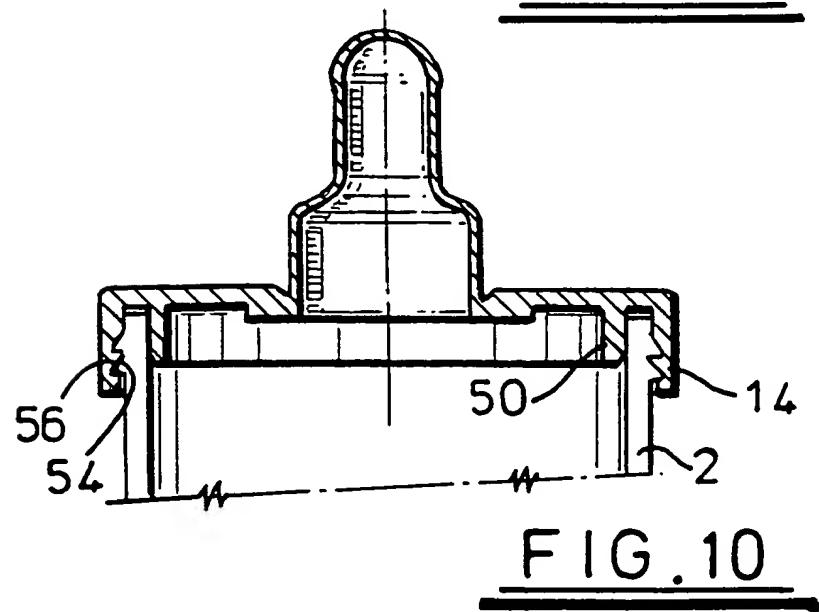
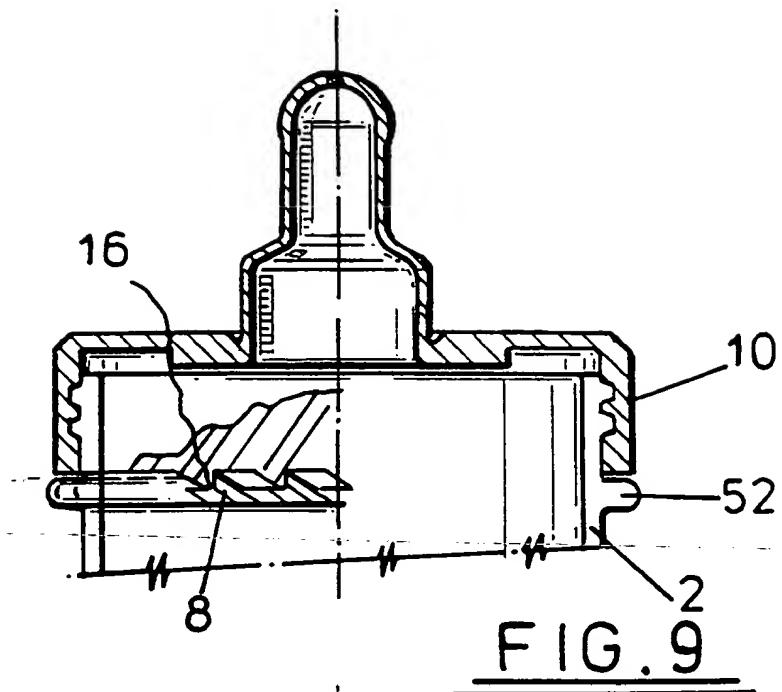
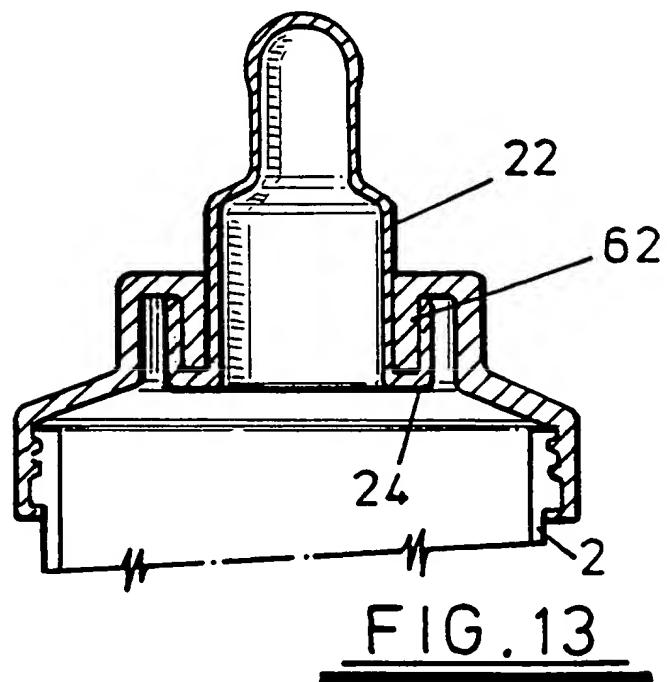
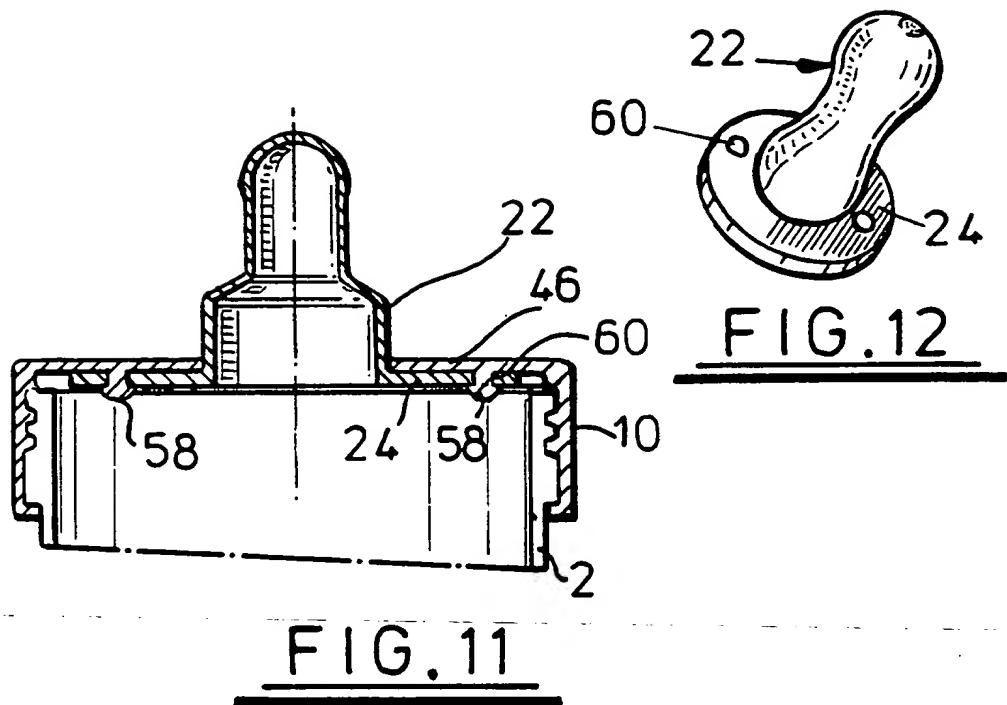


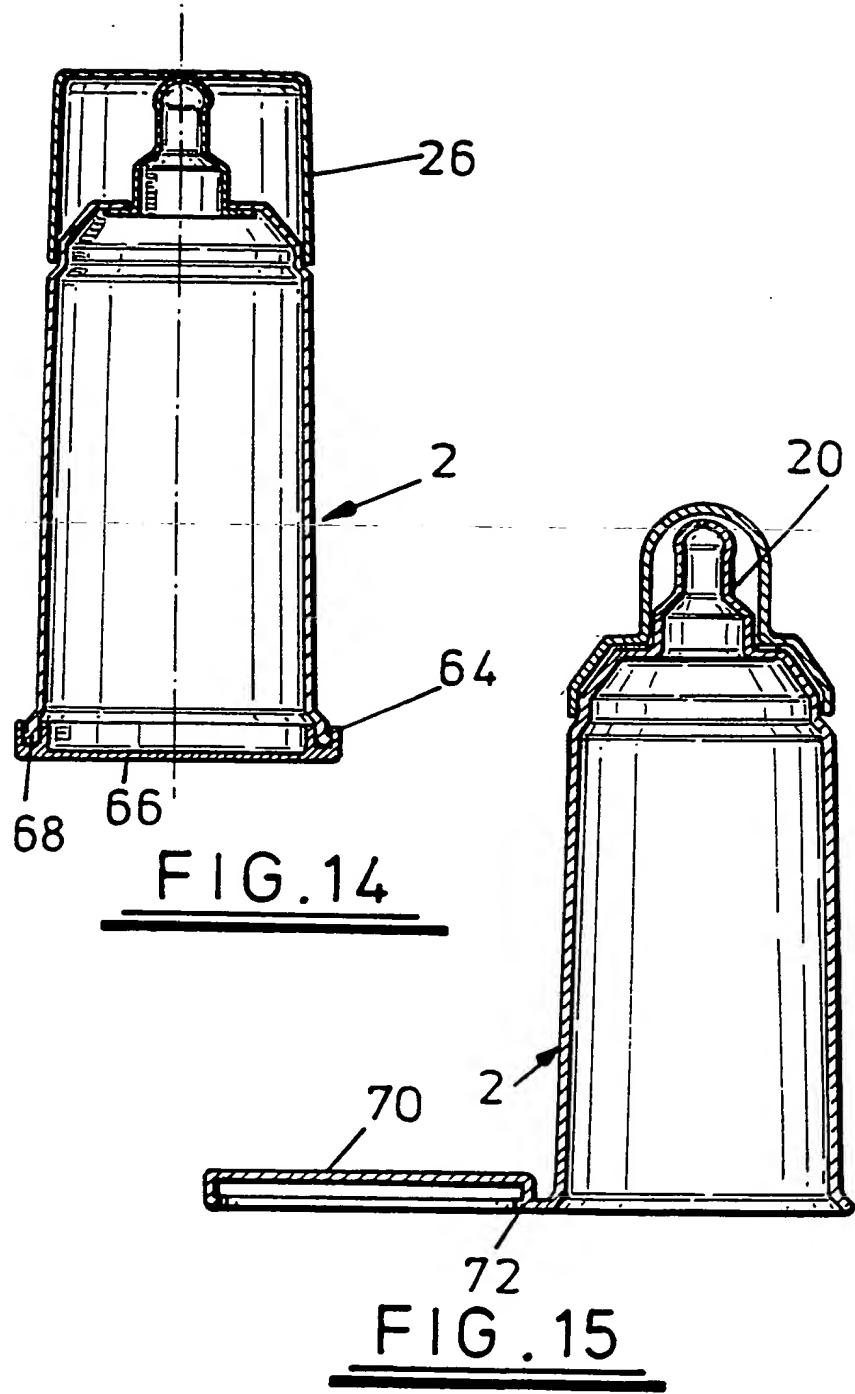
FIG. 1B

3-7FIG. 4FIG. 5

4-7FIG. 6FIG. 7FIG. 8

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CLAIMS

1. A single-use feed bottle of which the major components are made of plastics materials, the bottle including: a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a mouth intended to be sealed in a fluid tight manner by means of a screw-threaded closure, the closure and the body having on their inner and outer surfaces respectively mutually cooperating formations to cause the closure to be irremovable from the body after the closure has reached a limit position on the body, in which it forms a fluid-tight fit with the body, and in which a teat having a flange of smaller diameter than the inner diameter of the mouth of the body is clamped to the closure by a retainer member so as to render the teat irremovable from the closure.
2. A bottle as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mutually cooperating formations comprise a set of ratchet teeth on the closure intended to cooperate with a lug carried by the body.
3. A bottle as claimed in claim 2, wherein the lug of the body is provided by one of a set of ratchet teeth on the body.
4. A bottle as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 made by an aseptic process.
5. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, in which the retainer member is adapted to have its periphery clamped between the closure and the rim of the body when the closure is in irremovable position.
6. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, in which the retainer

member has an integral central stub cylinder which projects into the interior of the teat.

7. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the retainer member has a vent hole in a region which traps the teat flange against the closure.

8. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the body is made of polypropylene, and has been formed by an injection-moulding operation.

9. A bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, in which the closure, or closure and retainer, is or are made of high-density polyethylene by an injection-moulding operation.

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10. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, including a teat shield having an opening which is a push fit on a shoulder forming part of the closure.

11. A bottle as claimed in claim 10, in which the shield has in its opening a series of inward projections intended to engage a complementary recess in the closure.

12. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the body is made of transparent or translucent material, and carries at least one series of graduation markings enabling the volume of liquid in the body to be ascertained visually by inspection.

13. A feed bottle as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the retainer member has an outer diameter less than the inner diameter of the mouth of the

body, and in which the member is held in place on the closure by virtue of the resilience of the teat material.

14. A bottle as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the teat is made of a thermoplastics elastomer.

15. A combined closure and teat unit for use with a feed bottle, in which the closure and teat of made of dissimilar plastics materials by a two-stage aseptic process, in one stage of which one component is formed, and in the other stage of which the other component is formed in such a way that it becomes bonded to the said one component.

16. A unit as claimed in claim 15, in which the closure is formed with a series of ratchet teeth intended to permit the closure only to be screwed on to the body of a feed bottle once the teeth on the closure have come into contact with a complementary set of ratchet teeth carried by the body.

17. A feed bottle of which the major components are made of plastics materials by an aseptic process, the bottle including: a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a teat of plastics material permanently secured to it, or integral with it, and an open end at a location remote from the teat, the open end being intended to be sealed in a fluid-tight manner by means of a cap, the coupling between the cap and body being such that the coupling has to be broken to permit the cap to be removed from the body, the breakage ensuring that the cap is not again able to achieve a fluid-tight fit with the body.

18. A feed bottle of which major components are made of plastics materials,

the bottle including a body for holding a quantity of milk or other liquid, the body having a mouth intended to be sealed in a fluid-tight manner by means of a screw-threaded closure, and in which a teat having a flange of smaller diameter than the inner diameter of the mouth of the body is clamped to the closure by a retainer member so as to render the teat irremovable from the closure.

19. A feed bottle as claimed in claim 18, wherein the teat is made of a thermoplastic elastomer.

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## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference  AJL/CT/P3976/P4246	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b>		See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No.  PCT/GB99/00499	International filing date (day/month/year)  18/02/1999	Priority date (day/month/year)  21/02/1998	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC  A61J9/00			
Applicant  STERIBOTTLE LIMITED et al.			
<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of 6 sheets.</p>			
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report</li> <li>II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority</li> <li>III <input type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</li> <li>IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention</li> <li>V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</li> <li>VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited</li> <li>VII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application</li> <li>VIII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application</li> </ul>			

Date of submission of the demand  17/09/1999	Date of completion of this report  27.06.00
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer  Hagberg, A Telephone No. +49 89 2399 7432



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB99/00499

**I. Basis of the report**

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

**Description, pages:**

3-13                    as originally filed

1,2,2a                    as received on                    25/04/2000 with letter of                    25/04/2000

**Claims, No.:**

1-14                    as received on                    25/04/2000 with letter of                    25/04/2000

**Drawings, sheets:**

1/7-7/7                    as originally filed

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description,            pages:  
 the claims,                    Nos.:  
 the drawings,                    sheets:

3.  This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB99/00499

**V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims 5-8, 11-13
	No:	Claims 1-4, 9, 10, 14
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims 12
	No:	Claims 1-11, 13-14
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims 1-14
	No:	Claims

**2. Citations and explanations**

**see separate sheet**

**VII. Certain defects in the international application**

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

**see separate sheet**

**VIII. Certain observations on the international application**

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

**see separate sheet**

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY  
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB99/00499

**Re Item V**

**Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or  
industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Reference is made to the following documents:

DE-B-23 58 128 (Milupa AG) 30 January 1975 (D1)

US-A-3 549 036 (Ritsi) 22 December 1970 (D2)

EP-A-0 300 786 (Avent Medical) 25 January 1989 (D3)

2. Insofar as claim 1 can be understood (see Section VIII), D1 discloses all the technical features that are claimed (cf. D1, column 8, line 17 - column 9, line 27, figures): A single-use feed bottle (1) including a body (2) with a mouth (4). Therefore, claim 1 does not seem to satisfy the criterion of novelty set forth in Article 33(2) PCT, as far as this claim can be understood.

3. D1 also discloses all the technical features of dependant claims 2-4, 9, 10 and 14, as far as these claims can be understood (see again Section VIII).

For claims 2 and 3, see column 8, lines 35-40.

For claim 4, see column 10, lines 45-51.

For claim 9 and 10, see column 10, lines 50-63, figures 2 and 3a.

For claim 9, see column 10, lines 50-63, figure 2.

For claim 14, see column 6, lines 34-36.

Therefore, claims 2-4, 9, 10 and 14 do not seem to satisfy the criterion of novelty set forth in Article 33(2) PCT, as far as these claims can be understood.

4. Claims 7 and 11, and, insofar as these claims can be understood (see Section VIII), claims 5, 6, 8 and 13 do not seem to meet the requirements of Art. 33(3) PCT (inventive step), as these claims define features which are well-known in the art and obvious for the skilled person to introduce in the bottle of D1 without the exercise of inventive skill.

Claims 7, 8, 11 and 13 define well-known features of conventional bottles (see also D2, columns 3-5 of the description and figure 1).

For claim 5, see D2, column 4, lines 1-4.

For claim 6, see D3, column 2, lines 65-70, column 3, lines 55-64, figures.

5. The subject-matter of claim 12, if it were clear (see Section VIII), would seem to meet the requirements of inventive step (Art 33(3) PCT), as the prior art does not disclose nor suggest a retainer member which has an outer diameter less than the inner diameter of the mouth of the body of the bottle so that it would not be obvious for the skilled person to use this feature in a bottle according to D1.

**Re Item VII**

**Certain defects in the international application**

1. Claim 1 is not worded in the two-part form incorporating in its preamble the features disclosed in D1 (Rule 6.3 (b)(i)(ii), PCT)
2. The features of the claims are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses (Rule 6.2(b) PCT).

**Re Item VIII**

**Certain observations on the international application**

Claim 1 is not clear. In claim 1 is claimed a bottle including a body and a mouth. The mouth is defined as being sealable by a closure, but the closure as such is not claimed. The claim is also not clear, because it seems that a teat and a retainer member would be part of the bottle only in a 'limit position'. A teat or a retainer member as such is not claimed. As a closure is not claimed, nor a teat, nor a retainer member, it is not clear why these features are defined at length.

Further, in the dependent claims 2, 5, 6, 8 and 12-14 reference is made to these features which are not claimed as such in previous claims but are functional features that concern the use of the apparatus. The aforementioned dependant claims are therefore not clear.

It follows that claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 12-14 do not meet the requirements of Article 6 PCT.

## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

## PCT

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference <b>AJL/IR/P3976/4246</b>	<b>FOR FURTHER ACTION</b> see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. <b>PCT/GB 99/ 00499</b>	International filing date (day/month/year) <b>18/02/1999</b>	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) <b>21/02/1998</b>
Applicant <b>STERIBOTTLE LIMITED et al.</b>		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 3 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

**1. Basis of the report**

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2.  **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3.  **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

as suggested by the applicant.

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

1

None of the figures.

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/00499

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
 IPC 6 A61J9/00 A61J11/04

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
 IPC 6 A61J

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	DE 23 58 128 B (MILUPA AG) 30 January 1975	1-4,10
A	see the whole document ---	15,16,18
A	US 3 549 036 A (RITSI MICHAEL C) 22 December 1970 see column 2, line 26 - column 4, line 30; figures 1-7 ---	5,7,10, 11,18
A	EP 0 585 818 A (DART IND INC) 9 March 1994 see column 2, line 39 - column 4, line 35; figures 1-3 ---	5,12
A	US 4 676 386 A (PHLAPHONGPHANICH VICHAI) 30 June 1987 see column 3, line 30 - line 37 see column 3, line 46 - column 4, line 13 see column 4, line 31 - line 39; figures 9-11,16,17 ---	6,9,13, 14 15,18,19
		-/-

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority, claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

17 May 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

26/05/1999

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Authorized officer

Baert, F

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

CT/GB 99/00499

**C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	EP 0 300 786 A (AVENT MEDICAL LTD) 25 January 1989 see column 2, line 61 - column 3, line 35 see column 3, line 40 - column 4, line 17; figures 1,2,5 ---	8,9,14, 19
A	US 4 623 068 A (BROWN JOHN M ET AL) 18 November 1986 see column 2, line 16 - line 20 see column 2, line 28 - line 36; figures ---	11
A	FR 2 134 720 A (FILPIN PAULE) 8 December 1972 see page 4, line 23 - page 5, line 10; figures 5,6 ---	17
A	EP 0 819 417 A (ARREBOLA SANZ JOSE RAFAEL ;CRESPO MARZAL JESUS IGNACIO (ES)) 21 January 1998 cited in the application see abstract; figures -----	1

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/GB 99/00499

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			WO	9717936 A	22-05-1997
			LT	97140 A,B	29-12-1997
			LV	11964 B	20-06-1998
			PL	321323 A	08-12-1997